



Early Journal Content on JSTOR, Free to Anyone in the World

This article is one of nearly 500,000 scholarly works digitized and made freely available to everyone in the world by JSTOR.

Known as the Early Journal Content, this set of works include research articles, news, letters, and other writings published in more than 200 of the oldest leading academic journals. The works date from the mid-seventeenth to the early twentieth centuries.

We encourage people to read and share the Early Journal Content openly and to tell others that this resource exists. People may post this content online or redistribute in any way for non-commercial purposes.

Read more about Early Journal Content at <http://about.jstor.org/participate-jstor/individuals/early-journal-content>.

JSTOR is a digital library of academic journals, books, and primary source objects. JSTOR helps people discover, use, and build upon a wide range of content through a powerful research and teaching platform, and preserves this content for future generations. JSTOR is part of ITHAKA, a not-for-profit organization that also includes Ithaka S+R and Portico. For more information about JSTOR, please contact support@jstor.org.

XXIII.—*Notes on the Country lying between the Meridians of 55° and 64° East, and embracing a section of the Elburz Mountains in Northern Khorásán.* By JAMES BAILLIE FRASER, Esq.

THE great range of Elburz, which skirts the southern shore of the Caspian Sea, and pursues a course nearly east and west from the plains of Mogám to the highlands of Mergháb (improperly called Moorghâb), and the Házarah country, spreads out into greater width between the meridians of 55° and 64° east; that is, from Gúrgán* of Asterábád to Mergháb, and presents to the desert on the north a slope which has obtained the name of *Atak*,† literally the *skirt* (of the mountains), in the same way as *Dáman*, a province of Afghánistán, signifies the skirt of the hills sloping down to the banks of the Indus.

This tract, formerly one of the richest districts belonging to the sovereigns of these countries, and still covered with ruins of great cities, and vestiges of former prosperity, is now nearly a wilderness, or but sparsely occupied by tribes of Turkománs, who live partly on the produce of their flocks and herds, but much also on the proceeds of that plunder which they gain in inroads and pillaging parties systematically made by them upon their Persian neighbours.

The mountainous tract above alluded to, irregular in shape, and spreading out in some parts to a breadth of full 200 miles, is divided longitudinally into ridges, separating valleys which communicate with each other by passes or defiles, and form an extensive aggregate of districts, many of which are well inhabited and cultivated.

These districts may be conveniently arranged in several lines running from west to east, as they are divided by the principal intervening ridges, nearly as follows. Upon the skirts of the most southern ridge are found those of Meï-omíd, 'Abbás-ábád, Mazínân, Sabzawâr, Nishápúr, and Sheríf-ábád. Close behind these, but separated from them by ridges of greater or less altitude, lie Jájerm and Sang-khást, Nárdín, Jaghetái or Juveïn, Bám, and Miyán-ábád; Isferáin, Súfi-abád, Báwer, Sulţán-Meidân or Mádan, forming what is locally called the *Serd-viláyet*, or Cold Country, being that between the first-mentioned line of districts and the great central line which comes next to be described. This includes the districts of Armúdlí and Semalghán; the plains of Bujnurd, Shirwán, Khabúshân, Rádkân, Chinárán, Tús, and Mash-hed, which are all continuous with, or opening into each other. At the western extremity of this line are found some of

* Or Jurján.—S.

† A Turkish word, pronounced *etek* at Constantinople; it is exactly the *sinus* of the Romans.—S.

the passes to the lower country of Gurgán, hereafter to be noticed; while the eastern end opens into a nearly continuous valley which reaches to Herát.

A chain of mountains, unequal in height as in breadth, confines the great line of valleys just described, on the north-east, and among these lie irregularly disposed a number of valleys and elevated plains, each forming a district in itself separated by or intermingled with lofty and craggy ridges. The north-eastern base of this mountainous tract which bounds the desert runs nearly N.N.W. from the point at Ak-derbend,* where it is pierced by the Mash-hed river, to Paráú, another point to the N.W., where that part of the range terminates, and the mountains turning back at an angle, probably acute, towards the south, preserve a very irregular and indented line. Paráú, as we are informed by persons acquainted with the country, is a mountain bounding on the north a valley, the bed of a fine stream, and known by the same name; and from its extremity, we are told, a narrow chain extends to the lesser Balkán, 120 miles. Thence to the greater Balkán is said to be a distance of ten farsakhs,† or forty miles; and thence again to O'k-kóh,‡ or the Arrowhill, the distance is called twenty farsakhs, or eighty miles, from which, according to our informant, Khívali is not more than five days' journey. From O'k-kóh to Kuruk şúfi, where the Atrak falls into the sea, was said by the same person to be thirty farsakhs. These distances, though given by a person well acquainted with the country, are so uncertain that they cannot be relied on; insomuch, that no attempt has been made to use, or to reconcile them with other distances or bearings in the accompanying sketch.§

The following are a few of the best-known districts in this range of mountains. To the eastward lies Kelát-Nádiri,|| which is the last place of importance in that direction. Then, opening to the Atak, are found *Deregez*, *Sheúrek*, *Derbādān*, *Afghāz*, a fine wooded valley beneath a hill of the same name; *Gerístān Fírízeh* close on the verge of the Turkománs, *Germáu*,¶ in the same vicinity, *Gífhān*, *Rāz*, *Kúsh-Khāneh*, or the Hawk's Nest,** *Báikání*, *Kolpili*, *Thikmaván*, *Zerzáú*. These are all said to be fine districts, with plenty of villages, and some of them wooded. Further removed from the mountains, and upon their skirts, lie the wider districts of Tíhejen, watered by that river, and inhabited by the Turkomán tribes; Abíverd was once a fine district, but is now abandoned, as are Dirum and Nisá. N.W. of these lie

* White Defile (Turkish).—S.

† Or farsang, the parasanga of the Greeks.—S.

‡ Turkish name.—S.

§ Preserved in the library.—Ed.

|| Nadir's kelát, being his favourite stronghold.—S.

¶ Germ-áu or Germ-áv, i. e. warm water, a provincialism for Germ-áb.—S.

** Kúsh in pure Turkish signifies only bird.—S.

Akhāl, inhabited by Tekeh Turkománs, a well-watered sloping plain; *Archaman*, *Burmah*, *Bāneh*, *Kizil Rebát*,* *Shehrul-islām*, described as a place of extensive ruins built of fire-burned bricks, and *Paráu*, which appears to have been a place of pilgrimage, where there are ruined shrines to 'Alí, &c.

More in the mountains, and north of the last-mentioned range, lie the more mountainous districts, which are too numerous to be detailed, many of them consisting of little more than a single village. On the way from Deregez we passed through *Meiheu-Kokan*, *T'hverí*, *Kasmān*, *Daúlat-Kháneh*, *Ráwir*, *Shehrazān*, *Karácheh*, and *Sukíyeh*, to *Shírwān*. On our left we had the fine valley of *Kal'ah Yúsuf Khán*.† On the right were *Gerenheh* and *Inshá*,‡ with others, which give their waters to the *Atrak*.

From *Shírwān* we passed through *Dereh Shúrş* and *Hazár-jerib*|| to *Bujnurd*, having *Gérmeh Khán* upon our right, while on the left the mountain of *'Alátágh*¶ separated us from *Sang-khást*. Proceeding westward, we descended into the *Mónah* valley, passed through part of *Inshá* (another district), and leaving the valley of the *Atrak* to the right entered *Semalghán*, from whence passing through the desert places of *Zerd*, *Kohistán*, *Julgehi-Kelát-há*, and *Kalpúsh*, with *Múchih* on our right, and *Armudlí*** on the left, to *Deheneh-zoh*, the pass by which we descended into *Gurgān*.††

The mountains facing westward, from *Paráu* to *Senker*, are furrowed deeply with ravines, each of which gives access by a pass, more or less steep and abrupt, to the plain that intervenes between the base of the mountains and the Caspian sea. Of these valleys or passes the principal are the *Paráu*, the *Chander*, the *Sunt*, and the *'Serisheú*. These all pour their streams into the *Atrak*, of which they form a large proportion; and their course is necessarily much to the south of west. A ridge of hills, running a long way into the plain, and named *Marábeh*, divides the *Atrak* on the south from the *Şárášú*,‡‡ which joins it at the terminating point of the range. Through this valley runs one pass. The next is that of *Deheneh-zóh*, by which we descended. Next comes *Deheneh Kúzlú*,§§ which leads from a fine julgeh (green valley) *Kará Shokh*; then *Dehneh Esheklí*,||| which leads from the plain of *Armudlí*; then *Kúzlú Dehneh* and *Jul-*

* Red-hostel. † Lord Joseph's castle.—S. ‡ Please God!—S.

§ Salt valley.—S. || Thousand acres.—S.

¶ 'Alá tágh (Turk.), beautiful mountain.—S.

** Pronounced *Armút-lí*, i. e. Pear-place.—S.

†† Called by the Arabs, who substitute *j* for *g*, *Jurján*, the ancient capital of the country, of which a complete account, drawn from Asiatic geographers and historians, is given by the Baron de Sacy in the *Mines d'Orient*, i. 338.—S.

‡‡ *Sári-sú* (Turk.), i. e. yellow water?—S.

§§ Walnut-tree mouth (T.)—S. ||| Ass's mouth (T.)—S.

geh, which leads from Kalpúsh. The mountain of Seráú intervenes between Kúzlú and Esheklí Dehenehs; and Níl kóh,* a mountain celebrated in the Sháh Námeḥ, stands at the mouth of the latter.

But the mountainous tract which we have been describing becomes more peculiarly important from being the separating boundary between the fierce Turkomán tribes and the northern districts of Persia, which have been desolated by these marauders; and as the passes by which they reach the upper country all lead through this barrier, it becomes a matter of interest to ascertain the number and character of these several lines of approach.

From the best information that could be obtained upon the spot, the following are the principal passes from the Atak to Upper Khorásán, beginning from the eastern end of the tract in question:

1st, *Puli-Khátún*, or the Ladies' Bridge. I am not sure whether a separate pass has obtained this name from the bridge so called, which is thrown, as I believe, over the Mash-hed river, or whether the name merely designates a particular bridge in one of the succeeding passes. It is by this way that plundering parties destined for Turbat, Häiderí,† and the road towards Ghóriyàn, and Herát, ascend the hills.

2nd, *Ak-derbend*.

3rd, *Muzderán*.—I do not know whether these are one and the same, or different passes, but they are both on the road from Mash-hed to Serakhs. Burnes, in coming from that place, passed *Derbend* at forty-eight miles from Serakhs, and calls it the same as Muzderán. *Derbend* (or the gate) is a common term for such passes, and this may mean *Ak-derbend*, or the white gate. On the other hand, Burnes says nothing of the Mash-hed river, which certainly bursts through the southern continuation of the Kel'at mountains at *Ak-derbend*, from which it seems probable that he ascended by a separate pass, namely, that of Muzderán, leaving the Mash-hed river and the *Ak-derbend* pass to his left. There is also a doubt as to the precise point where the Mash-hed river joins the T'hejen.

The scenery of these passes, whether one and the same, or different, is described as picturesque, though not rich in wood. The ascent from the Mash-hed side is comparatively equable; but the corresponding descent towards Serakhs, on the N.E. side, is more precipitous.

4th, *Kelát-Nádirí*,‡ a pass to the Atak, lies through the inclosed valley of Kelát; but independently of its natural obstacles, which are great, no one can pass through that valley unless with the consent of the chief, who resides in this natural stronghold.

5th, *Chapishlú*.§—To the west of Kelát. It is steep and rugged,

* Blue mount (P.)—S.

‡ Nádir's castle.

† Häider's tomb.

§ Blindman's-buff-Place.—S.

and with great difficulty practicable for guns; but I am not in possession of any further particulars regarding it.

6th, *Alláhu-Akber*, or *Nardeván Nádirí* (the ladder of Nádir).—This leads directly from the valley of Deregez, and then by T'háverí or other roads into the valley of Khabúshán. It was improved by Nádir Sháh to facilitate the passage of artillery, and is defended by three bastions. Though steep and rugged on the south side of the mountain, the road down to the Deregez valley is tolerably good and easy. I saw heavy guns dragged both up and down this pass.

7th, *Tuñjí*.—A very steep ascent from the south, impracticable as it now stands, for the passage of guns—a long, tortuous and steep, but less difficult descent into the Deregez valley. It is connected with the pass of Zírek, which traverses the central ridge, and is sharp but not difficult.

8th, *Zohi-Gerenheh*.—A fine romantic pass; difficultly practicable for guns, and very defensible. It crosses the most northern ridge; and its lower extremity is defended by a bastion with guns mounted, which commands the water.

9th, *Zohi-Deringeh*.—A very romantic defile like the last, difficult though practicable for guns. There is a fine spring on each side of the *Kot'hal*† (or ascent and descent). One principal branch of the river Atrak takes its rise at Inshá, a point in this defile, and the stream must be repeatedly crossed in threading it. There is a *derbend* or rocky pass like a gateway at its lower extremity.

These are the principal passes from the Atrak to the upper country; but there are a variety of others of less importance and more difficulty, several of which lead directly to Deregez, from vallies opening at Rádíkán, Chinárán, and Khabúshán, &c.; others again lead from various points, but join the passes already enumerated. To the west of Bujnurd the hills become lower and more open, so that the paths by which the Turkománs can invade the upper country are by far more numerous. There are four or five which lead into the Mónah valley alone; several others which lead to Semalgán, and others still more easy, that crossing the Atrak and its valley, lead to Jájerm, Meï-omeid, 'Abbás-ábád, &c. Between Deregez and Kelát-Nádirí there are also some pathways of great difficulty and scarcely practicable for horsemen.

Itinerary with bearings and distances from Sabzawár to Mashhed by the *Serd-viláyet*, or upper (cold) country.

May 30th and 31st, 1834.—From Sabzawár to Káhríz-degez, nine hours and a half, chiefly by night. First half over a plain, then through a defile among low hills, and a pass called Chehel

* The word *Zoh* signifies a defile.

† Kutál or Kútal, a mountain-pass.—S. Kut'hal in northern Persia.

Pehlewán or the Forty Champions. The village, a miserable ruinous place on a plain twenty miles broad by sixty or seventy long, commencing at the mountain and district of Jaghetái on the west, and issuing out on the plain of Nishápúr on the east; it is bounded on the north by the hills of Bám and Miyán-ábád.

May 31st and June 1st.—On to Maskún, a small village, and then by night through the 'Alí Zengí pass, and up a grassy valley with a stream to 'Abdu-llah-gáu; distance about forty miles from Káhríz-degez, and direction about N. 25 E., on the whole time eleven hours, through hills of moderate height covered with grass, with plains among them of various extent. 'Abdu-llah-gáu is a thriving village of a thieving tribe, in the plain or valley of Sultán-Meidán, and within two miles of that town, now ruined.

Bearings from Káhríz-degez:—Village of Maskún of route N. 30 E. 12 miles. Direction of route, N. 35 E. 15 miles; of 'Abdullah-gáu, N. 25 E. 30 miles; of Súfi-ábád (not seen) N. 5 W. 15 miles; of Bám (not seen) N. 28 miles; of Miyán-ábád (not seen) N. 25 W. Peak of Jájerm-hill, pointed out, probably an error, N. 42 W.

June 2nd.—From 'Abdu-llah-gáu to Nádír-tepeh,* to a ruined caravanseray, where we halted for breakfast; all the way through green valleys and cultivated land, with moderate pasture-hills on either hand. Then entered the long valley of Khabúshán, Chinpárán, &c., nearly in the same direction, and after eleven hours and a half, of which three-quarters in halts, reached the small village of Kal'ah Seyyed-hà, distance about 42 miles.

June 3rd.—On to Gunáh-ábád;† along the same plain, partly cultivated, partly meadows, to Gunáh-ábád; generally fine grazing-ground, but the country ruined by wars and plundering parties; distance about 24 miles.

June 4th.—On to Mash-hed,‡ passing through Khushmítí, and along a fine plain, with plenty of grass and cultivation; distance 28 miles.

From Mash-hed to Deregez; and from thence, by Bujnurd, to Gurgān.

June 18th and 19th.—To Rádkán, as formerly, through the plain of Mash-hed, by Tús, and through the meadow of Chínarán.

June 20th.—From Rádkán to Muchulún, about 14 miles, passing through the thriving village of Súhún, and all along the skirts of the hills that bound the valley on the N.E.

June 21.—To Yestanjí, 10 miles—a miserable village; direction from Rádkán, distant 24 miles, N. 58 W.; rising among hills on the right to Chamani-Naucheh; and then on same direction, crossing a small range to Kal'ah Yúsuf-khán—passed

* Nádír's-hill. (T.)—S.

† Sin-abode.—S.

‡ Mash-hed Imám Rizá, i. e., the place of the Imám Rizá's martyrdom.—S.

many pretty valleys, with much verdure. Kal'ah Yûsuf-khân* is a fine village, in a green, well-cultivated, and pleasant valley, through which runs the *Yaë'*,† in a full stream, which joins that which flows by Khabûshân.

On nearly same direction, ascending the narrow valley, or defile of the *Yaëk*, to T'háverí—a knot of three or four villages, in a small plain, surrounded by well-cultivated hills.

June 22.—On from T'háverí, to the pass of Zík,‡ about six miles; then descend into the pretty green valley of Bosmeyú. Direction of Kal'ah Yûsuf-khân, from top of Zirek-pass S. 20 to 25 W. On to top of Túinjí § pass—a very steep zig-zag path—up the face of a precipitous cliff. From top of Túinjí to Mohammed-ábád of Deregez, 15 miles distant N., 50 E. On descending, first very precipitously;—then through a tortuous defile, for full twelve miles;—then, turning sharp to the left, up the bank of the ravine, we entered the valley of Deregez, and rode in a northerly direction for full 16 miles to the Persian camp—no bearings obtained.

July 1.—Bearings from *Kizil-kótal*, a height overlooking the Atrak, about 8 miles N. E.:—Abíverd—due east 12 miles. *Bábájuk*, *Mír*, and another village, N.N.E. about 8 or 9 miles. General direction of the hill-skirts and the hills themselves, from Kelát Nádirí, and probably from Serakhs—so far as can be seen and judged—probably to Nisá Dirún, Mehineh, &c., for 60 miles at least, about N.N.W. and S.S.E. Nothing to be seen looking on the Atak but an apparently boundless plain, brown, arid, and dusty—without a vestige of habitations, except the villages mentioned.

July 2.—Mohammed-ábád, we crossed the plain or valley of Deregez, to the foot of the pass of Alláhu-Akber||—which ascended: road good—broad, and ascent, for the most part, not abrupt. No bearings taken, but direction by general observation somewhat to the westward of south.

July 3.—Descend Alláhu-Akber pass—very rough and precipitous—but the heavy guns were taken down this way; and on, about 4 miles in all, to the Serdár's ¶ camp, in the hollow of Meíheú-kokân, a rich green valley, with a fine stream—up which we marched, and crossed the intervening high ground, to a descent nearly as lofty and rugged as the Alláhu-Akber pass, by which we dropped into the valley of T'háverí again.

July 4.—On, in a westerly course, up the T'háverí valley—a fine rich green *julgeh*—and through those of Kasmán, Daulat-Kháneh, Ráver, Shehrizán, to Kárácheh.** No bearings, but by occasional glances at the compass direction very little to north

* Joseph Khan's Castle.—S. † Yáik, or Yáyik (T.) i. e. broad, wide.—S.

‡ Zirek (P.) swift.—S. § Túyinjí (T.) watchman.—S. || 'God is Great.'

¶ Commander's, (P.)—S. ** Black Well. (P.)—S.

of west. The whole way, a succession of the richest and greenest meadows, watered by fine streams.

July 5.—Quitted the line of julgehs, or natural meadows, by a pass to the left, and rose high among a maze of hillocks—the skirts of the northern hills of the Khabúshān and Shírwán Valley, to Sukhí, about 18 miles, the road traversing a tract of arid heights;—then 6 miles more, to Shírwán, along a plain—rich, but a good deal burned up. Shírwán, a small town, once containing 3000 houses and fortified, now a ruin almost empty, and the wall broken down in every part.

July 6.—From Shírwán to Bujnurd, over a series of craggy heights to the Kotal of Alakhahband—from whence, on left, the fine village and district of Zauran—into which descended. Further on, to right, saw the pass of Kal'ah-zoh, which is said to lead directly to the Atak without any bad descent, and is accordingly a great route of the Turkomans;—next turned up a narrow and winding ravine, called the Dereh Shúr (salt-valley), which is the boundary between the lands of Khabúshān and Bujnurd. At the head of this Dereh we came to the plain of Hezajerib, formerly a notable place of Turkoman resort, but now cultivated. A pass, called the Ak-kotal, leads from this plain over a succession of broken ground, into the valley of Bujnurd.

July 12.—Onwards 7 miles, to Lenger Village, about N.N.W.

July 13.—On 4 miles, to Akhór pass,* from Bujnurd, about N. 75 to 80 W.—a high hill, overlooking the Mónah Valley, and hills intervening between it and the Atrak.

Bearings from thence:—Kal'ah-khán of Sémalghán, distance 14 miles S. 75 W. General direction of course of Atrak, W. 25 N. Mónah Valley lies E. and W. Akhal on the Atrak, as pointed out by the guide, N.E. Mehineh, N. 25 E. Paráu, N. 25 W.

On our right was a high hill, *Kará-búlák*,† with a village, *Karácháí*, at its foot; Germeh-khán, a julgeh or valley, N. and N.E. of Bujnurd, furnishes a stream to the Atrak. The water from Shírwán comes round it on the N., and falls into the Mónah in a fine full stream. That from Shírín-Dereh, a small dell among the maze of hillocks and hills on the opposite side, between the valley and the Atrak, enters the valley nearly opposite. The waters of Kúsh-kháneh and Germ-ab (or Germáu), which run in a channel not in sight, join the Atrak (into which the Mónah has fallen) a good way below; and we hear of no other stream of consequence on that side, till those of the Sunt, Chander, Paráu, &c., which came from their respective hills and valleys.

On the left, the water from Sémalghán joins the Mónah—then

* Stable. (T.)—S.

† Black Town. (T.)—S.

that of Inshá, joined by that of Airán—both rising in the mountain of Kurkud; then, lower down, the streams from the Khál-básh-julgeh, and from Múchíh.

The mountains N. of the Atrak appear to be a most singular mass of dry, brown, scorched hillocks and rocky ridges, heaped on each other, and ribbed and furrowed in the most extraordinary manner, but exhibiting not the smallest particle of either vegetable or animal life. A few dark spots, it is true, on nearer inspection, upon those nearest the valley, denote bushes of the cedar or thorn,* common to such arid regions; but in the three or four days' journey across these mountains, I could hear of no habitable spot, and scarcely of a fresh-water spring. The Sunt Mountain is the highest to the north of the Mónah and Atrak valley, as Kurkud is on the south.

Onwards, descending into the Mónah valley, and through several Turkomán villages, to Kal'ah-khán of Sémalghán.

July 15.—Onwards, across a desert, dry track of irregular ground, skirting Kurkud, to the site of a village called Zerd,† long ago ruined by the Turkománs, on a pretty streamlet, when breakfasted. Then, in same direction, to the Mohák valley, and turned up to Kahistán,‡ another ruined village, where we bivouacked: it is on the Inshá stream, and fairly within the centre of the Kurkud mountains.

July 16.—Onwards, among heights and ravines, the skirts of Kurkud, down to a deep broad hollow, *Derehi-kelát-há*, or “The Valley of the Forts,” leading into the Khálbásh valley or plain, between which and that of Armúdlí intervenes a long low ridge, the tail of a part of Kurkud. This valley, irregularly varied with high grounds, is all barren and arid. Onwards, among hillocks on the S.E. side of the Múchíh valley. The Atrak here, within about four farsakhs or sixteen miles, makes a bend to the northward;—turn up through fine corn-land of the Góklán Turkománs,§ and descend through the Dehenéh-zoh—a precipitous and long pass through a deep forest, to the camp of Mahmúd Walí Khán Góklán;—general course from Bivouac at Kohistán to this camp, nearly W. $\frac{1}{2}$ N., from 48 to 50 miles.

July 18.—5 farsakhs, or 20 miles farther to Haider Khán's camp, course about S.W. by S.—a perfect plain, covered with the withered and burnt-up vegetation of the spring, where not eaten bare by the flocks of the Góklán Turkománs.||

* Juniper? (S.) † Yellow. (P.)—S. ‡ Mountain Track.—S.

§ Or kóklen. Klaproth; Asia Polyglotta, p. 217.—S.

|| The spelling of the names is in some places doubtful, as it is very difficult to ascertain which, *z*, *s*, *k*, or *g*, is required, unless the word has been written down by a learned native. Some of the names ending in *ún* should probably be terminated by *án*, as that syllable, when final, has now for nearly three centuries been usually pronounced *ún* by the Persians.—S.